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The Real Nature of the CHURCH or KING-  
DOM of CHRIST.

A  
SERMON

Preach'd at the CHURCH of

St. MARTIN in the Fields, May 19.

And at That of

St. OLAVE OLD-JEWRY,

AND

St. MARTIN Ironmonger-Lane

8<sup>th</sup> LINE 24 1717.

IN ANSWER to the Bishop of Bangor's

SERMON upon the same Text

With a Postscript, in Answer to his Lordship's

Letter to Dr. Snape; so far as it affects the

said SERMON.

By JOSEPH TRAPP, M. A.

Lecturer of those Parishes

The Second Edition

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St. JOHN xviii. 36.

-----*My Kingdom is not of this World.*

**I**T is an Observation no less true than ancient ; that, considering the Degeneracy and Corruption of Human Nature, there is scarce any Proposition, however absurd in it self, and pernicious in its Consequences, but has been, or may be, by some one or other, asserted and maintain'd ; no Precept, or Doctrine of Man, or even of the God who made him, but may be perverted to a Purpose quite contrary to, or at least quite beside, its original Meaning and Intention. And yet notwithstanding we are thus forewarn'd by the Testimony of preceding Ages, and by the more particular Experience of our own ; we cannot but stand amaz'd to think, that from the Text which I have now read, it should ever be argued, that because our Saviour's Kingdom is not of this World, therefore it is impossible he should have any Ministers in it.

In the Words themselves two Things are contain'd the one imply'd, the other asserted.

I. That our Saviour is a King.

II. That his Kingdom is not of this World.

In discoursing upon this latter, which is the express Proposition of the Text, it will be proper to consider the *Nature and Constitution of his Kingdom* ; to shew how it is not of this World ; or to explain the true Sense and Meaning of that Expression. And, This accordingly shall be the main Subject of my ensuing Discourse. But because it is impossible to establish Truth without overturning Falshood ; It shall consist of two Parts in one of which I shall briefly lay down the true and genuin



genuine Doctrine of the Scriptures upon this great Article: In the other I shall endeavour to disprove the Tenets which have been lately advanc'd in a Sermon preach'd upon this very Text; and that too (with Grief and Confusion we are forced to acknowledge it, because we cannot conceal it) by a Bishop of our Church.

I. The Kingdom of Christ is his Church; and that both Triumphant in Heaven; and Militant on Earth, For between these two there is a near and strict Relation, or Bond of Unity; which is declar'd in that Article of our Creed (founded upon plain Texts of Scripture, and undermin'd by a Doctrine lately preach'd upon This) in which we profess to believe *the Communion of Saints*. The Church Militant comprehends the whole Society of those upon Earth, who are baptiz'd into the Faith of Christ, and govern'd by an Authority deriv'd from him. This latter is necessary to the being of his Kingdom, or Church, properly so call'd: i. e. as it is as a *Society*: And without that Circumstance there is, I believe, but one Person in the World who has an Idea of a Church. For since our blessed Saviour was not always to Govern it in his own Person here on Earth; he appointed certain Delegates, called Apostles, to be its Rulers under him, and by Virtue of his Commission; which he gave them in the most solemn manner.

*All Power is given unto me both in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Matth. 28. 18, 19, And John 20. 21. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. i. e. with the same Power and Authority, to propagate and govern the Church. In pursuance of this Commission, the Apostles did Accordingly govern the Church, and Appoint others to govern after them. Thus St. Paul ordain'd Timothy, and Titus; and the former of these is commanded to lay Hands suddenly on no Man. 1 Tim. 5. 22 Which shews that the Imposition of Hands, or the Power of Ordination belong'd to his Office. And to the latter the Apostle speaks thus. For this Cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders*

Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee. Tit. 1. 5. This Ecclesiastical Government, if not in the Time of the Apostles themselves, yet most certainly in that of their immediate Successors, was Episcopal; and administer'd by the Three Orders of Bishops Priests, and Deacons: and so it has continued to this very Day.

Such is the Kingdom of Christ in this World: But all this while it is not of this World: For between those two Things there is a wide difference. Divine Inspiration was once, and the Grace of God (some of it, 'tis to be hop'd) still is in this World, as wicked as it is: but neither was ever of it. And a Traveller, we know, may be in a Country which he is not of. This Distinction, one would think, is plain enough. And yet (as it will appear from what shall be discours'd) it has not been sufficiently attended to in a Sermon upon the Words now before us. Our Saviour's Kingdom then is not of this World: That is to say, it is not of a Secular or Temporal, but of a Divine and Spiritual Nature. But even This latter is far from excluding all visible Authority, as shall be shewn in its proper Place. For the more particular Proofs of what is here opened shall be produced under my Second Head; Truth being always confirmed and established, and more fully display'd, by the Detection and Confutation of its Contrary.

II. I proceed therefore in the Second Place to consider the Doctrines advanced in the Sermon above-mentioned; and the inconclusive Reasonings upon which they are grounded.

And here I have engaged in one of the most disagreeable Tasks, that ever I undertook. Controversies in Religion are unpleasant to all good Christians: And those Controversies more especially, in which inferior Persons find themselves obliged in Conscience to oppose their Superiors. But if this be always hard; it is sometimes necessary too: And it is the more so, by how much the more eminent is the Station of Those, by whom erroneous and dangerous Tenets are maintained: Because the Authority of their great Names has so much



much the more spreading and malignant an Influence upon the Minds of the People. In the Primitive Church, some of the most noted Heresiarchs were Bishops; and, as such, were opposed and confuted by Presbyters, as well as by those of their own Order. I might here properly enough alledge the Example of this very Prelate himself. But be that as it will; however I may express my self with a just Indignation against the Principles he advances; I shall be sure to have a due regard to his high and holy Function. If his Positions be true; he has little Reason to insist upon the Distinction between the Superior, and Inferior Ministers of Jesus Christ; for from those Positions it will necessarily follow, that Jesus Christ has no Ministers at all.

The Substance of what he insists upon, may, I think, be gathered into these Three Assertions.

I. ' That the Kingdom of Christ is the same with the Church of Christ. †

II. That the Church of Christ is the \* Number of Men, whether small, or great, dispersed, or united; who truly and sincerely are Subjects to Jesus Christ alone, as their Lawgiver and Judge, in Matters relating to the Favour of God, and their eternal Salvation. And therefore.

III. That in this Church there are † no ' visible Governours, Judges, or Interpreters: And that there are not, appears from these two Reasons; ' Because Christ's Kingdom is not of this World: And because if there were such Governours, Judges, &c. They would be Kings, not Christ; and Rule in their own Kingdom, not in his.

This seems to set his Doctrine in a clearer Light, than that Method which he himself hath chosen. For his two Heads (as they are called) are to me very strange ones. I say, to me; For I cast his Thoughts into this Order, only to make them plainer to my own Apprehension. But however I may differ from him in Me-

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thod, I will not knowingly misrepresent his Meaning.

His first Proposition is true; That the Kingdom of Christ is the same with the Church of Christ. But then he so explains those Words, as utterly to destroy the Things signified by them; or (if you please) the one Thing signified by both. I would willingly obviate all Misunderstandings. If the Words dispers'd, or united, in his strange Definition of a Church, be used as relating to the Circumstance of Place only; that part of his Account is true. If they relate to Society, or Communion of Members with each other, I conceive it is not so: In that Sense, (if there be any Church at all) they must be united, and cannot be dispersed. And it is very plain that he would have those Words so understood, as to leave it indifferent whether there be any Communion, or not: tho' these ambiguous Terms might be made use of, to serve for a Salvo upon Occasion. By the main Scope of his Discourse indeed he makes it impossible that there should be any; but those Words only make it indifferent whether there be any or not. And that such is his Meaning appears from this very Definition, or rather Anti-Definition, it self. For whereas I believe, every Body, but He, conceives Society, and Communion, to be essential to a Church; according to that of the Apostle, *Eph. ii. 19, 20, 21*.  
*Y<sup>th</sup> fellow* ' Ye are Fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the  
*spiritual* ' Household of God; and are built upon the Foundation  
 ' of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself be-  
 ' ing the chief-corner Stone; in whom all the Building  
 ' fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple  
 ' in the Lord': And according to our 19th Article  
*if visible* ' The visible Church of Christ is a Congregation of  
*as such* ' faithful Men, in which the Word of God is preach'd  
*not spiritual* ' and the Sacraments be duly administred according to  
*hall* ' Christ's Ordinance: In the Account given us of  
 ' Church by this Bishop, there is not the least Hint of  
 ' any thing relating to Society, any more than to Preach-  
 ' ing, or Sacraments. Nay, he does not so much as af-  
 ' ford us the Word Congregation used in the Article  
 above



above-cited; but substitutes Number in its room. It cannot be alledged that tho' those Circumstances, Communion, Preaching, and Sacraments, be not expressed in this Definition, yet they may by a good Caviller be spun out of its Bowels; because Men cannot be truly and sincerely Subjects to Jesus Christ, unless they live in such Communion, and partake of such Ordinances: This, I say, cannot be alledged. For First, It must be a wonderful Definition which omits some of the essential Characters of the Thing defined, and leaves them only to be drawn out by Consequence, and Deduction. But, 2dly, This Account is not only defective, but something worse. The Circumstances we insist upon are not only not expressed, but consequentially excluded. If Christians must in Matters of Salvation be Subjects to Christ alone; there's an End of all Ecclesiastical Ordinances. But a fuller Discussion of this falls more properly under the next Assertion; for he very frankly explains himself upon this Subject in many express Passages of his Sermon. The next Position therefore is this:

*this consequence is false*

' That \* in this Church, or Kingdom, with regard to the Affairs of Conscience, and eternal Salvation, Christ hath left behind him no visible, human Authority; no Vicegerents to supply his Place; no Interpreters upon whom his Subjects are absolutely to depend; no Judges over the Consciences, or Religion of his People. These are the hopeful Points of Doctrine raised from the Text: And they are backed by such a Train of Argumentation, as I verily believe never, till now, appear'd in the World, since Reason was in being. But before I come to examine the Proofs, it will be proper, in the Assertion it self to observe the Construction of those Words; no visible, human Authority. Suppose there be none such in the Church; can there not be a visible, divine Authority? And that too relating in some Measure to Things in this World; tho' it be not at all of it? but by

*possibility  
no proof of  
existence*

no real<sup>to</sup> that Expression no visible human Authority, we shall be told he means no visible Authority in Man. Tho' I am perswaded this is the first time that ever it was so used and 'tis a strange dark Solecism of Words, for so clear and exact a Writer, and one that is so careful not to be misled by Sounds; Yet let This be his Sense: This then is what we absolutely, and totally deny; and which he endeavours to prove by Two Arguments.

The first is drawn from the Words of the Text it self  
 " \* As the Church of Christ, says He, is the Kingdom  
 " of Christ, He himself is King." Yes, doubtless  
 " And in that it is implied that he himself is the sole  
 " Law giver to his Subjects, and himself the sole Judge of  
 " their Behaviour, in the Affairs of Conscience, and  
 " Salvation." Why so? " And in this Sense ther fore  
 " his Kingdom is not of this World; that he hath in those  
 " Points left behind him no visible human Authority.  
 " &c. Here is no Reason given why it is so implied: But  
 " that is his way of Arguing thro' the whole; of which  
 " more hereafter. But his Inference, as I above hinted,  
 " proceeds from his not distinguishing between the Par  
 " ticles of, and in. Ecclesiastical Power is not of this  
 " World: Because it is derived from Heaven, and is of a  
 " divine, and spiritual Nature: But it is in this World  
 " for all That; nay, it partly relates to Things not only  
 " in, but of this World; tho' chiefly to those of the next.  
 " The Occasion of our Saviour's speaking these Words  
 " to Pilate, was to obviate an Objection, which both  
 " Romans, and Jews, were always ready to urge against  
 " him; that he affected a Temporal Kingdom over the  
 " latter. But does it follow that because he was no Rival  
 " to Tiberius in the secular Government; therefore he in  
 " tended to have no Ministers in this World with relati  
 " on to his Kingdom which is not of it? Ye are from be  
 " neath (says our Saviour to the Jews in another place of  
 " this Gospel) I am from above: Ye are of this World, I am  
 " not of this World. John viii. 23. But both They, and

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 les tyrants  
 1 pet. 5. 3.  
 y<sup>e</sup> passages  
 of I. 8. 17.

are nothing to y<sup>e</sup> point  
 \* Ibid



were in it. And addressing himself to the Father;  
 and speaking of Himself, and his Disciples to whom  
 he gave the Authority which we are now considering:  
 John xvii. 11. *And now I am (i. e. I very speedily shall  
 be) no more in the World, but these are in the World, and I  
 come to thee.* And ver. 14. *The World hath hated them, be-  
 cause they are not of the World, even as I am not of the World.*  
 His Disciples we see (i. e. his Disciples as such) were not  
 of the World; tho' they were in it; and the same may  
 be said of the Authority with which they were invest-  
 ed. Nay farther, the Bishop seems to forget himself,  
 even with regard to the Things of this World, most  
 improperly, and strictly speaking. For in that part of  
 his Argument which is taken from the Rewards of  
 Christianity, He affirms \* that 'all the Sanctions  
 which our Saviour thought fit to give to his Laws  
 were not of this World at all. No? Not at all? Is  
 there *Nothing* of this Kind in that Beatitude of our  
 Saviour; *Blessed are the Meek: For they shall inherit the  
 earth?* Nor in those Words of his; *Seek ye first the King-  
 dom of God, and his Righteousness; and all these things, (viz.  
 Temporal Conveniences, of which he had been speak-  
 ing before) shall be added unto you?* Mat. 6. 33. And has  
 Paul no Meaning, when he says, *Godliness is profitable  
 to all things; having Promise of the Life which now is, and  
 of that which is to come?* 1 Tim. 4. 8. That those Re-  
 wards and Promises are neither ultimate, nor universal;  
 that very little Stress is to be laid upon them, in com-  
 parison of those which are not of this World; and there-  
 fore that these Texts are to be taken in a qualify'd  
 sense, and with Restriction, and Limitation, I readily  
 acknowledge. But sure they mean *something* Temporal.  
 And yet notwithstanding these plain Scriptures, the  
 Bishop affirms; \* that 'the Laws of Christ's Kingdom,  
 as He left them, have *Nothing* of this World in their  
 View': And then goes on thus; † 'No Tendency

*or nothing for  
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 do plainly  
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either to the Exaltation of *Some* in Worldly Pomp and Dignity; or to their absolute Dominion over the Faith and Religious Conduct of *Others* of his Subjects; or to the erecting of any sort of Temporal Kingdom, under the Covert, and Name of a Spiritual one. They have no Tendency, I confess, to the Exaltation of *Some* in Worldly Pomp, and Dignity: For Example, not to the Exaltation of Those, who plead against the very Being of their own Order; broach Doctrines which directly tend to the unhinging our Religion; and publickly impugn That Cause, which they are bound by the most sacred Ties of Conscience to defend: doing the best of their Endeavours to introduce Anarchy, and Confusion into the Church, and to establish Heresy, Liberginism, Infidelity, and Atheism, upon the Ruins of Christianity.

As to the erecting of any sort of Temporal Kingdom under the Covert and Name of a Spiritual one; This is a home Stroke at Something; and I am in the Judgment of all reasonable, and equitable Persons, whether, according to this Account, there can be any Church upon Earth, which He seems to call a Temporal Kingdom, tho' at the same time He himself takes notice that it is at least pretended to be *Spiritual*; and it has a thousand times over been prov'd to be such.

His other Argument is this: That if there were such Vicegerents, Law-givers, Judges, and Interpreters of Laws in the Church or Kingdom of Christ, as we imagine; \* they would be Kings, not Christ, and rule in their own Kingdom, not in his.

To which I answer, 1. That were this Reasoning from Consequences much stronger than at present it happens to be; still there is no true Reasoning from

Consequences against Fact. This Bishop, it seems, is of Opinion that it is absurd to suppose such a Power in the Church: We prove that there actually is such a Power

*ye Test here is not favourable to ye Author's adversary having been advanced*

*ibid.*

*So may ye papists say.*

*-act. tis ag<sup>st</sup> fact & bp<sup>s</sup> auth<sup>r</sup> proves as y<sup>e</sup> papist do for they make use of same reasons & passages*



in the Church. I have already produced several Texts of Scripture to evince that our Saviour has appointed Ministers in his Kingdom: (amazing it is, that we should, at this time of day, be put upon the Proof of such a Point, and that too by one of his Prime Ministers) and I shall here mention one more among many others: And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, Eph. 4. 11, 12. Here Church Authority, and Church Communion, are both as expressly asserted as Words will allow. And I now moreover add, that our Saviour's Delegates or Substitutes answer to all the Three Offices which he bears; They are his subordinate Priests, as he is High Priest; his subordinate Preachers, as he is Prophet; and his Ministers, as he is King. Shall we be told, that tho' these are his Ministers; yet they have no Authority from him either to decide, or judge, to interpret old Laws, or to make new ones; or any way to act under him, and for him? If this be the Case; I desire to be inform'd what we are to understand by a Minister of any Prince, either Temporal or Spiritual?

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But, Secondly, Why must Ministry, Vicegerency Judging, Interpreting, Law-making, &c. be necessarily destructive of the Supreme Authority? One would have expected, that an Argument so entirely novel and singular might have been enforc'd with some sort of, at least, seeming Reasons, But, to our great Disappointment, here is not the least Attempt of that Kind. How does he prove this strange Assertion? Why, he repeats it about ten times over; and that is all the Proof that I can meet with. Since then there is nothing urged for it; let us see whether any thing can be urged against it. And here I confess my self at a Loss. The Proposition is so prodigious; that there is no way to confute it but to *show* it. Whatever is proved must be proved by something plainer than it self. And what can be more evident than this, that a Man invested with Authority

Authority from Christ, and commanded to execute it, does not impeach that Authority by executing it? Or in other Words, that he is not an Usurper by being obedient? The contrary Assertion is this; That for a Man to act by Christ's Commission and Command, is to usurp his Kingdom. I have nothing to say, but to appeal to all the World whether this be consistent with Reason, or Religion, or with the first Principles, and Foundations of Common Sense? And whether in its Consequences, it does not strike even at Civil Government, as well as overturn the Ecclesiastical?

No; says this Right Reverend Author: There is a Difference in the Cases. \* Human Legislators can sensibly interpose; our Saviour never does. As to the former; Admitting they *can*; yet suppose they *never should*: (for it does not follow that they *will*, because he says so: ) To say that *then* their Ministers commissioned by him, and acting by their Authority would usurp their Supreme Legislative Power, is so far at least, and in *this Case* to destroy even Civil Government. But of This more hereafter. Our Saviour, he says, never interposes. Here the Word *Infallibility* is thrown in with regard to the Ministers of the Church. This seems purely by way of Amusement; to puzzle and confound; and hint something about Popery: For the Word is Nothing at all to the Purpose; No body among us, that I know of, pretending to be infallible. But where is this Difference? Temporal Legislators can sensibly interpose in all Cases in which their Interposition becomes necessary to assert the Interpretation of their Laws, &c. But our Saviour never does. Not *sensibly*, I acknowledge: But is there not such Thing as the Guidance, and Influence of his Holy Spirit; to inform the Understandings of his Ministers; to assist their Infirmities, and correct their Er-

do not papists  
argue upon World. Matth. 28. 29. Does not that imply some  
very topics



thing of interposition? But admitting that he never *has* interposed; Certainly He *may*, if ever he thinks fit; and that too, if he pleases, in a *sensible* manner. The Reins of Government are still in his own Hands; and he may resume all delegated Authority, whenever he judges it proper so to do. But admitting yet farther, that as he never *has*, so he never *will* thus *sensibly* interpose; nay, that he never *did*, nor ever *will* interpose at all: Sure for *that very reason* the visible deputed Authority in his Church, for which we are now contending, is so much the more *necessary*. Nor is his Kingdom thereby usurped; since still all depends upon his Commission, upon his Will, and Pleasure; and He might resume all, if he would, tho' it is now supposed he never intends it. This Distinction therefore is so far from assisting its Author, that it proves directly against him. To return to the other Branch of it, upon which I promised to say something more: Suppose a Temporal Prince were in a Foreign Country, resolving to continue there all the Days of his Life, taking no Cognizance of Affairs in his Own: Could not his Ministers, notwithstanding This, be invested, if he pleased, even with unrestrained Authority; Would not that Non-interposition be it self a Reason why they should be so invested? And would it not be, so far as it related to that Kingdom, during that Prince's Life, a Denial even of Civil Government, to say that those Ministers would usurp their Sovereign's Authority, by acting in Pursuance of his Commission, and Command?

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What is urged in the next Paragraph might well have been spared. Who pretends to have a Right † to add to the Sanctions of Christ's Laws; i. e. to increase the Number, or alter the Nature of the Rewards, and Punishments of his Subjects, in Matters of Conscience, or Salvation? The Word *Rewards* especially might have been omitted. For (except in some few particular Cases, and even in Those the Rewards, if they may

be properly so called; are annex'd rather to the executing the Laws upon others, than to the keeping them our selves: I say except in such Cases) Punishments are the only Sanctions of Laws made by Men, whether acting by Human, or Divine Authority. The Subjects are punished for breaking them, but never rewarded for keeping them. If he means (and if he does, his Meaning is very darkly expressed, and very little to his Purpose) not Rewards annexed to the Laws, but voluntarily confer'd by particular Persons; yet even this way, how is either the Number of them increased, or the Nature of them alter'd? The Number of them, I think, is not determin'd; And in their Nature, they are (as I have shewn) twofold; Temporal, and Eternal. Eternal ones can be confer'd by God only: But why may not Temporal ones be confer'd by Men? Punishments indeed are strictly, and properly inflicted by Human Legislators both Civil, and Ecclesiastical, in Matters of Conscience, and Salvation; and no Harm done neither. The Number of the Punishments, as well as of the Rewards, of Christ's Subjects, I never yet heard determin'd; and so cannot say whether it be increased, or not. As to the Nature of them, those which can be inflicted in this Life must be either Spiritual, or Temporal. Of the former Kind (chiefly, tho' not solely) is Excommunication for Example: which the Church has a Right, and Authority from Christ to inflict. Temporal Penalties are sufficiently known; and some even of these are allowed to be imposed by Ecclesiastical Governors. I do not say allowed by this Bishop: For he absolutely excludes \* all other Legislators, and Judges, besides Christ, in Matters relating to Conscience: And † is not only against the Pains of Prisons, Banishments, Fines, or any lesser, and more moderate Penalties, but also against the much lesser negative Discouragements that belong to Human Society. And why? Because those Things are

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not the Instruments of Persuasion; Faith is not the Effect of Force; and Penalties do not make Men think, and chuse aright. How often soever this sort of Reasoning has been urged; it is nothing, at the Bottom, but Fallacy and Amusement. Penalties are not the Instruments of Persuasion — Tho' I much question the Truth even of That, so far as it relates to moderate, & gentle Penalties (and we abhor the Thoughts of any more) yet suppose it to be universally true; is persuading, and convincing, the only Business of Legislators? Or indeed is it any Part of their Business? Is it a Crime, or an Absurdity in them, to do something to secure the Constitution? To persuade, and convince, is the Task of private Persons, not of the Laws; which are, or ought to be, entirely calculated for the Good of the Community, and the Security of the Establishment, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil. But all this affects our present Circumstances, so far only as it relates to the Negative Discouragements, as they are called. By these, I suppose, are to be understood Incapacities to hold Offices of Trust, Honour, and Profit. The Church, and the State are, if I mistake not, equally Parts of our Constitution: And for Persons to have a Share in the Government, who are not of the Constitution, is, I humbly presume, absurd in it self, destructive in its Consequences, and a Thing unheard of in any Age, or Nation. *indeed for if Sultans take such steps to preserve their power, no wonder if others imitate them.*

And what sort of Proof is there offered against all these Discouragements, whether negative, or positive? Why, \* the Sanctions of Christ's Laws are Rewards and Punishments: But of what sort? Not the Rewards of this World, not the Offices, or Glories of this State: Nor the Pains of Prisons, &c'. Supposing, but not granting (for I have prov'd the contrary) that the Rewards and Punishments immediately annex'd to Christ's Laws by Christ himself had no View to this World: yet it does not follow that those who are impowered

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by him to be Legislators under him, may not enact any Laws not contrary to those which he himself hath delivered. This would hold good, even tho' the Bishop's Assertion in another Part of his Sermon were true, which yet it is not; & that we 'read nothing in his Doctrine about his own Kingdom, of taking in the Concerns of this World, and mixing them with Those of Eternity: No Commands that the Frowns and Discouragements of this present State should in any Case attend upon Conscience and Religion'. I say, even if this were true; it would not prove the Point proposed: Because tho' our Saviour's Doctrine should be allowed to have nothing of This, it has nothing contrary to it; which is sufficient. But besides: The Doctrine of St. Paul is virtually the Doctrine of our Saviour. And yet he says something about the Rod, as well as about the Spirit of Meekness: 1 Cor. 4: 21. About delivering a Man to Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, 1 Cor. 5. 5. And it was not for nothing that our SAVIOUR himself said, If he refuse to hear the Church; let him be unto thee as a Heathen Man, and a Publican, Matth. 18. 17. It will not avail to say that all this is Spiritual Penalty: For besides that Temporal, and Spiritual ones are by this Writer equally deny'd; Excommunication is of a mix'd Nature, chiefly Spiritual indeed, but partly Temporal. And a Man upon whom the Sentence of it is denounced, is certainly under the Frowns, and Discouragements of the present State: But the Bishop is not only offended with all Kinds of Punishment, whether Temporal or Spiritual, whether inflicted by Civil, or Ecclesiastical Power, in Matters of Conscience and Religion; but with a \* Judgment over the Consciences of Men, which he calls 'assuming the Determination of such Points as cannot be determined, but by One who knows the Hearts'

*ask whether* But cannot a Minister of Christ decide a Point of Conscience, without pretending to know the Hearts of  
*Can a man* submit his Conscience to y<sup>e</sup> judgment of any man or assembly of  
*apt says not to an angel frōg Heaven*



Men? Cannot the Case be stated to him; and he determine accordingly? Can he not by his Studies be skill'd, and is he not by his Office impow'ed to determine in such Cases? It may as well be argu'd, that because a learned Lawyer, or Judge, is not a Searcher of Hearts; therefore he has neither Skill, nor Authority to determine a Point of Law upon which his Opinion is demanded. Nay, the Argument will as well hold against the Determination of all the Judges put together: For they, I think, do not pretend either to Infallibility, or to Omniscience. But as I have elsewhere § considered the Case of Reason, and Authority, private Judgment, the Power of the Church in interpreting the Scriptures, and fixing and ascertaining difficult Points of Divinity, as also that of particular Divines in deciding particular Cases of Conscience, and the like: I shall say no more of it here, but refer to what has been there discoursed.

The Matter, \* He tells us is not at all made better by their declaring themselves to be Vicegerents, or Law-makers, or Judges under Christ, &c. Here seems to be a Promise of something New, and an Answer to an Objection which might be urged. Whether it be so or not; let any one judge upon reading the whole Passage. To shew the strong Reasoning of which, I shall only at two proper Periods insert what I have already proved, and he has not so much as attempted to disprove; viz. that the Ministers receive their Authority from Christ: And then let us see what a Face will be set upon it.

Nor is the Matter at all made better, by their declaring themselves to be Vicegerents, or Law-givers, or Judges under Christ, in order to carry on the Ends of his Kingdom. For it comes to this at last, since it doth not seem fit to Christ to interpose; so as to prevent, or remedy all their Mistakes, and Contradictions, that if they have this Power of interpreting, or adding Laws, and judging Men in such a Sense, that Christians shall be indispensably and absolutely obliged to obey those Laws, and submit to those

§ Preservative against unsettled Notions, and want of Principles in Religion. Discourse the First. \* p. 14.

C

Decisi-

Decisions: I say, if they have this Power lodged with them tho' Christ gave it them, and can, when he pleases, take it from them: then the Kingdom in which they rule, is not the Kingdom of Christ, but of themselves: He doth not rule it, but They. And whether they happen to agree with him, or differ from Him, as long as they are the Law-givers, and Judges, without any Interposition from Christ, either to guide or correct their Decisions; They are Kings of this Kingdom, and not Christ Jesus; tho' all the Authority they have, or pretend to, is entirely derived from him. Thus, I say, his Argument would stand, were those Words inserted; and inserted they may be; since they are true; and He has not so much as attempted to shew the contrary. Admirable Reasoning indeed! The Perfection of distinct Ideas, and clear Thinking.

The next Paragraph begins with, If therefore. Here one would expect something of an Inference, or Conclusion. And so here is one, according to that compendious way of Reasoning, called circular Arguing, or proving a Thing by it self; or barely asserting it, without any Shew of Proof at all. For indeed in his whole Process, and not in this Paragraph only, there is no New Medium from the Beginning to the End. But let us now consider the Passage before us \*. If therefore the Church of Christ be the Kingdom of Christ, it is essential to it that Christ himself be the sole Law-giver, and sole Judge of his Subjects in all Points relating to the Favour, or Displeasure of Almighty God. I deny the Consequence. And that all his Subjects, in what Station soever they may be, are equally Subjects to him. This Proposition is true, tho' not to the Purpose; And the Consequence again is false. And that no one of them, any more than another, hath Authority. — No Proof of This. — To make new Laws for Christ's Subjects, or to impose a Sense upon the old Ones; which is the same Thing. This is no truer than the former. To make a Law is one thing, to interpret it is another. Or to judge, censure, or punish the Servants of another Master, in Matters relating purely to Conscience or Salvation. Still all This is gratis dictum; and not proved either here, or any where else. After This I am surprized at the next Sentence. If



any Person hath any other Notion either thro' a long Use of Words with inconsistent Meanings, or thro' a Negligence of Thought, let him ask himself, &c. This, I say, surprizes me: For I do not remember that I ever before met with such an empty Repetition of Words, and such a Negligence of Thought, as in this very Passage. Let him ask himself whether the Church of Christ be the Kingdom of Christ or not? Yes; it is: and what then? And if it be; whether this Notion doth not absolutely exclude all other Legislators, and Judges, in Matters relating to Conscience and the Favour of God? No; not in the least. Or whether it can be his Kingdom, if any mortal Men have such a Power of Legislation, and Judgment in it? Yes; Why not? This Enquiry will bring us back to the first, which is the only true Account of the Church of Christ; That it is the Number of Men whether small, or great, &c. And so we are brought back to that choice Definition of a Church, which I have before examined; and which, I confess, is fit to march in the Rear of so many weighty, and well-proved Propositions.

But all this while, I have taken no Notice of that useful Word Absolute, with a Negative prefix'd, as apply'd to the Authority of Church Governours. Upon this I observe, 1st. That it is sometimes mentioned, and sometimes drop'd; so that the Reader may be deceived, where it is omitted; and the Writer have an Evasion, where it is inserted. This may deserve a Name, which I will not give it. But 2dly. Either this Word has some Meaning; or it has none. If Nothing be meant by it, we need say nothing of it. If it signifies any thing; it must either be that the Authority of Church Governours is not ultimately, and finally decisive with regard to all Beings, but that God has an Authority Superior: And then 'tis what no Body denies; and the Bishop only combats a Phantom of his own raising. Or else, that the same Authority is not decisive as to the Subjects of the Church, so as to silence them, and make them acquiesce in those Decisions; and then it is absolutely false: and so We are just where we were before.

Having thus dispatched his Two Heads, as they are called, He advances to his Inferences: Which are Three; Two of them are the same with his Premises; and the Third but very little different from them. Nothing therefore now remains but from Them, and the other

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Parts of his Sermon, to make such scattered Remarks, as may happen to fall in our Way.

He says, † *the Idol of unintelligible Authority*, both in *Belief, Worship, and Practice, i. e.* I suppose such an Authority as We contend for, removes the Minds of Christ's Subjects from Him, to weak and passionate Men. Notwithstanding this soft Saying; A Man may be very weak, and yet not passionate: He may talk With great Coolness, and yet be both weak, and wicked: Notwithstanding such his Coolness, He may be the worst of Pleaders in the worst of Causes; He may renounce Common Reason to argue against Common Honesty; or, in other Words, be diabolically Mad. In our blessed Saviour's time, when Demoniacks were frequent, we read of a *dumb, and deaf Devil*; and, for ought I know, there might be such a Thing, as a heavy and a dull one.

He appears concerned that upon the Pretence of Church-Unity, every Body should not be permitted to profess, and publish what He thinks fit. I have elsewhere \* endeavoured to state the Case of Creeds, Articles, and Subscriptions, the Authority of the Church to punish the Spreaders of Wicked Doctrines, and the Reasonableness of that Authority, and also to answer all the material Objections. And therefore I shall now only add, that whereas He says † “Both these Pretensions (*i. e.* of the Necessity of requiring People to profess what they do not believe, or not to profess what they do) “are founded upon the mistaken NOTION of the Peace, as well as Authority of the Kingdom, *i. e.* the Church of Christ. I answer as to the former, that No-body among us requires any such thing. If They do not believe, they ought not to Profess. But then in Defence of the Churches Authority, and for the Preservation of the Churches Peace; They ought not to be admitted into the Number of its Ministers. The Authority of the Church I have already proved; and it does not follow that \* *it is founded upon the Ruins of Sincerity, and common Honesty*, because some People who have neither (Those, for Instance, who plead against those Doctrines, which

† p. 27. \* *Preservat. Disc. I.* † p. 28. \* *Ibid.*



they have in effect sworn to defend) will for the sake of Temporal Advantages profess what they do not believe. This is not the Churches Fault, but Theirs. If they do believe these Things; why do they scruple? If they do not; why do they profess?

As to the *Peace* of the Church; what we are contending for is neither *Stupidity*, nor *Sleep*: † but *Order*, and *Uniformity*. Controverted Opinions of little Moment are not very dangerous; tho' even Those ought by private Persons to be submitted to the Authority of the Church. But suppose a Man should publicly, and in Print, blaspheme Christ, or deny the being of God: Will this Bishop say, that the Church ought to encourage, or even to permit such an Outrage, in Order to prevent her own *Sleep*, or *Stupidity*? His Argument from the supposed Prevention of Reformation is groundless, and fallacious. Our Church has sufficiently declared that no Church has Authority to determine any Thing Contrary to the Scriptures; nor does she any where preclude the Judgment of private Persons; but only requires them to submit to her Decisions in abstruse Points of Divinity; of which, it is impossible for the gross of Mankind to be Judges: Tho' they may be, and ought to be so in the plain Points of Faith, and Practice, and the express Declarations of the Word of God. So that notwithstanding this Ecclesiastical Authority; a Reformation may very well ensue, if ever the Church shall be so corrupt as to want one.

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In Matters of Religion, and the Church, some Men among us, advance the Civil Government too high: Others the Ecclesiastical. But I leave it to be judged whether this Prelate be not against Both: Whether with respect to Conscience and Salvation, He be not for immediately *putting down all Rule, and all Authority, and Power*: † I say immediately, and before his Redeemer thinks fit to do so, by *delivering up the Kingdom to God, even the Father*: And all this out of pure Zeal for our Saviour's Sovereignty: i. e. whether He would not make Him a glorious King by destroying his Kingdom: Whether He will ei-

† p. 21. † See Calvin upon the Place.]

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ther allow the Church any Authority herself, or the State, in Matters of Religion, any Authority to assist, her, That the Secular Power should in these Points be called upon to Countenance, or protect the Ecclesiastical, He takes to be contrary to Christ's Declaration, that his Kingdom is not of this World. I think I have proved that there is no such Contrarity; and I am sure it is Prophecy'd that Kings shall be Nursing Fathers to the Church, and Queens Nursing Mothers. If the Account given by him be true, I do not understand how in the Prayer for the High Court of Parliament we can properly beseech God to direct and prosper their Consultations, to the Advancement of his Glory, and the Good of his Church. That his Doctrine concerning Temporal Penalties and Incapacities upon the Account of Conscience, and Religion, strikes at the Civil Legislature, as well as at the Ecclesiastical, and is favourable to the Papists, as well as to Protestant Sectaries; are Truths which have been press'd upon him, and which it seems not in the Power of Sophistry to evade. But tho' both Papists and Presbyterians may be so far obliged to Him; yet neither will thank him for the main Substance and Tendency of his Doctrine: which is indeed calculated for no Religious Sect that I know of, but the Quakers. They perhaps may receive it; and 'tis worthy of their Principles, and their Understandings.

His Doctrine, I say, would fit Them: For of "External Religion He says, \* "Those are Two Words which God hath put asunder, and which therefore no Man should join together. I confess he adds this Parenthesis, in the Sense fix'd upon them by many Christians. But as He does not tell us what that Sense is, I think Those saving Words are of no great Significancy; especially since he does not explain himself by informing us what External Religion he at all approves of, or whether He at all approves of any. Nay, he expressly asserts, † that "Times, Places, Ceremonies, Imaginary Austerities, and all other outward Circumstances, cannot be the least Part of a Man's Religion, properly so called, any more than his Food, or his Raiment, or any other Circumstance of his Life. Whether properly so called is in this place intended to have any Mean-



ing, or is another seeming Salvo of an expression, I know not. However it be; sure those Circumstances may at least be term'd Parts of Religion, properly so called, with at least a little more Propriety, and something nearer to the Truth, than Food or Raiment can: Because the former have at least a somewhat nearer Relation to Religion than the latter. But farther, to speak the real Truth; As Man consists of Two Parts, a Soul, and a Body; his Religion must be partly (and indeed chiefly) Internal, but partly External to: we are doubtless commanded, (and it would be strange if we were not) to worship God in Spirit and in Truth: But we are likewise commanded to glorify him in Body, as well as Spirit; both which are his. Cor. 6. 20.

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The wonderful Account which this Author gives of Prayer, and the Love of God, so as to exclude Heat, and Emotion, from Both, has no Relation to the Text; and therefore I say no more of it, but that I believe such an Account was never before given of either; and that it does not quite so much tend to destroy Internal Religion; as his main Doctrine does to destroy External.

The Disproof of his Tenets has taken up so much Time, (too much, I fear, for your Patience) that I have none left to lament, and mourn for the unhappy Occasion of this Discourse; Otherwise I could be very copious upon that melancholy Subject. All I can do, is to warn you against the Tendency not only of such Doctrines, but of these our unfortunate (God grant they may not prove fatal) Contentions. I have often put you in mind, that neither an unchristian Doctrine, nor the unchristian Practice of one, or a few Persons, of how high and sacred a Character soever, is any Argument either against Christianity, or the general Body of Christ's Ministers. It has been properly and pertinently observed, that our LORD himself had but Twelve Apostles; and we never heard that the Apostacy of one of 'em was any Reflection upon the other Eleven. Fix, and settle This in your Thoughts; and pray earnestly, and fervently, with more than a calm and undisturbed Address, for the Peace of this our Jerusalem: For the sake of which, in Consideration of the Principles I have been now opposing, we may justly use the pathetic Words of the Royal Psalmist: Arise, and have Mercy upon Sion; for it is time that thou have Mercy upon her: yea, the time is come.

† p. 6.

Finis.

# POSTSCRIPT.

While this Discourse was in the Press; the World has been presented with *The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bangor's Answer, to the Reverend Dr. Snape's Letter.* That Excellent Person is too well able to defend himself, to need any Assistance, much less such a mine. I shall therefore, while we are expecting his Reply, only presume to take Notice of his Lordship's Letter, so far as it affects my Sermon, and no farther.

Some Parts of it, if I mistake not, are already answered in the Sermon it self; by way of Anticipation or by obviating Objections. For the rest; I desire to be informed, what we are to think of a Writer, who expresses himself in such a manner, that No body can understand him? For not only Dr. Snape, and my self, but all the Lower House of Convocation, and every Body else, as far as I can observe, have it seems been entirely ignorant of his Meaning. And what sort of Meaning must That be? A few particular Persons indeed may thro' Prejudice, and the Spirit of Contradiction, willfully wrest, and pervert the Sense of an Author: but 'tis monstrous to suppose the same of all Mankind. And to all Mankind I appeal, to Adversaries, as well as Friends; to Those who approve of his Doctrine, as well as Those who dislike it; whether they did not apprehend his Sermon to have some farther Aim, than a bare Denial of the Infallibility of the Church of Rome, (for no other pretends to be infallible) and of the Consequences following from it: Especially, since in the whole Sermon, from the Beginning to the End there is not one Word about that Church; no such Word as *Rome*, *Romish*, *Popery*, or *Popish*, or any Expression equivalent. So that it was, God knows, in the Integrity

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Integrity of my Heart, that I said the Word *Infallible* seem'd to be thrown in purely by way of Amusement, as being nothing to the Purpose. I confess his Doctrine, if true, would effectually prove, that no Church is infallible; but then it would prove much more; and 'tis for This Reason that we oppose it.

Nor does his explaining himself upon the Word *Absolute* at all mend the Matter; but rather makes it worse than it was before. What I have already, tho' very briefly, said upon it in the preceding Discourse, seems to me sufficient: but We shall now be more particular. I said that as it is sometimes mentioned, so it is sometimes drop'd: This the Reader may observe in several Passages which I have cited. I shall now repeat one, because it is very remarkable; and tho' I have already produced it, yet it was with a different View. P. 16.

Whether (the Querie, as it there appears, is equivalent to an Assertion) this Notion of it (Christ's Kingdom doth not *absolutely* exclude all other Legislators, and Judges, in Matters relating to Conscience, or the Favour of God; or whether it can be his Kingdom, if any Mortal Men have such a Power of Legislation, and Judgments in it." Here, I confess, the Word *absolutely* is used, and 'tis used *emphatically*: But it is apply'd to excluding, not to the Legislators, and Judges: 'Tis not said that their *absolute* Authority is excluded; but that they are *absolutely* excluded; which is much more. Nor can [such] before [Power] have any reference to that Word; because it is not mentioned in the whole Paragraph. In which too it is asserted a little before, that no one of Christ's Subjects more than another hath Authority. The reading the whole Paragraph, will make my Observation much stronger.

But admitting that either this Epithet, or this Adverb, were *always* inserted in its proper place. He tells us that the Church has not an *absolute* Authority, i. e. not such a one as obliges us to obey, without \* Examination, or Consideration, whether such Commands, &c

contrary to Christ's Will, or not : (Words, by the way which are not to be found in the Sermon, but thought of since) Who says she has ? This is what No body among us denies. But in discoursing farther upon it. He advances Doctrines of the same Tendency, and Reasonings, equally inconclusive with Those which I have been considering in the foregoing Discourse. \* If (says he) by an *Authority to act for him*, you mean an Absolute Authority to make New Laws, or interpret Old ones, relating to the eternal Salvation of Christians, and binding their Consciences absolutely ; I do indeed maintain it, that he hath left no such absolute Authority in any *MAN*, or *MEN*. And I beg leave to maintain the contrary ; according to the Sense in which I have explain'd my self already ; and which will further appear from what I have now to offer. It does not in the least make against my Assertion to say, that the Subjects have a Right to examine ; and are not to obey those Commands which are contrary to Christ's ; which We all acknowledge. In this Case the Church hath not only *no absolute Authority*, but *no Authority at all*. And This indeed, helps us to a Clue which will unravel the whole Maze of the Fallacy. If the Church, or State, or Both, have any Legislative Authority *at all* in Matters of Conscience, or Salvation ; it must be *Absolute* ; as *all Legislative Authority* is and must be. So, that in my Opinion, His Lordship might as well, or better, have *spoke out*, and roundly asserted, that in these Points, the Legislature both Ecclesiastical, and Civil, hath *no Authority whatsoever* ; that have raised such a Cloud of Dust, about the Word *Absolute*.

He says † that if upon Examination, he finds the Instructions (of Church Governours) to be agreeable to the Will of Christ, He obeys them ; but not because of their Authority, but of Christ's. If otherwise, We all grant he is not to obey them. True : But is there no



Medium between these two Cases? Are there not some things, relating to Conscience, and Religion, about which Christ hath determined nothing? And are not those the Objects of human Laws, and Decisions? The Forms and Modes of Worship relate to Religious Difficult Points in Scripture, and Divinity, relate to Conscience and Salvation: In both these some Men have Authority to determine: And that absolute too, if they have any Authority properly so called.

It is here to be observed, that his Lordship tells us how much Authority he does not allow; but not how much he does allow. For what he says about a <sup>†</sup>Right (a very low Word; Authority would have been too high) of appointing Time, Place, or Ceremonies, relating to Religious Worship, &c. is according to his Doctrine, just Nothing. And therefore if he does not see the Consequence of it which he mentions; I think I do. For what signifies That Right in the Governors; if there be not in the Subjects an absolute, & indispensable Obligation to Obedience? If they are to obey, or disobey, just as they think fit; the Right of governing them is of no great Value. The Church of England (he tells us) <sup>†</sup>is founded upon the noble Claim of the Right of Christians to judge for themselves. It is so; and upon another Claim too, which is no less Noble: I mean that of Right in her self of being absolutely obey'd in Matters either indifferent in themselves, or difficult to be understood. Nor does this latter Claim interfere with the former.

What I have laid down being duly attended to; it will be easy to give an Answer to every seeming Argument, or real Evasion in the Piece before us, so far as it relates to the Subject of my Discourse. I utterly deny therefore that by our Concession concerning the Right of private Persons to examine, and their Duty not to obey what is contrary to Christ's Commands, we cut off \*all Interpretations of Christ's Laws, all

\* p. 48. † ibid. \* p. 41.

imposed Terms, Creeds, Articles, &c. So far from it that notwithstanding such our Concession, there is (and I still insist upon it) an indispensable Obligation upon the Subjects of Christ to an absolute Obedience to the meer Authority of the Church, in all those, and such like Instances; when nothing appears contrary to the Word of God. For in these Cases we always mean Absolute with Respect to Subjects; not to a Superior Power. We are not to obey the whole Civil Legislature, if the Matter of their Laws be contrary to God's Word. But it is to be hoped it does not therefore follow that the whole Civil Legislature has no Absolute Authority

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